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38

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Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

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CONTENTS OF PART 207.

No. 897.	PAGE
A Stern Chase. Chapter XII. Hugh's Trust	529
Cervantes.....	534
Snowdrop. A Poem	539
A Farve Fête De; In Two Parts. Part I.	539
Diet and Dyspepsia.....	545
Victims. Chapter II. Two Households.....	548

No. 898.	PAGE
A Stern Chase. The Third Part. Chapter I. Retrospect in Cuba	553
The Bewitched House.....	559
A Farve Fête Day. In Two Parts. Part II.	563
Victims. Chapter III. Madame St. Laurent.....	567

No. 899. Vol. XXXVIII.	PAGE
A Stern Chase. Chapter II. At the Play.....	1
Chronicles of English Counties.—Sussex. Part III....	6
Nostalgia.....	10
When you are Sad. A Poem	12
Studies of Over the Way. A House in Horseferry Road. In Two Parts. Part I.	12
On Ghosts.....	17
Victims. Chapter IV. Typhus or Typhoid?	20

No. 900.	PAGE
A Stern Chase. Chapter III. Julian's Evil Genius ...	25
House Hunting	29
American Manners	32
Doubt. A Poem	36
Studies of Over the Way. A House in Horseferry Road. Part II.	36
Victims. Chapter V. Sent Away	42

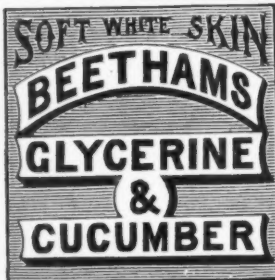
Title and Index of Volume XXXVII. in this Part.

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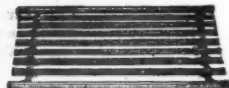
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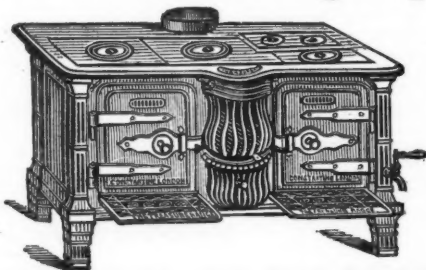
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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1886.

PRICE TWOPENCE

A STERN CHASE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

THE SECOND PART.

CHAPTER XII. HUGH'S TRUST.

THE person who had asked for an interview with Liliás was standing at one of the windows of the dining-room, holding a hat with a mourning-band behind his back. He was contemplating the lawn with so much interest, that he was seemingly unaware of the presence of Miss Merivale until she spoke.

"You have asked to see me?" she began.

The person whom she addressed turned round and bowed to her.

"Miss Merivale?"

"I am Miss Merivale. Pray be seated."

He took the chair which she indicated, and the slightest possible smile just flickered over his mouth. He had in that moment noted the emotion that was betrayed by the pallor of Liliás's face.

"Good!" was his complacent thought. "She's not going to take it coolly. Either she scents danger to the money, or she is of the long-memoried kind, and will jump at my news. Suits my game either way."

"You state you have something to say to me about Cuba," said Liliás. "If that be so, pray let me hear it."

Her visitor set his hat on the floor, and took out a note-book. His movements were slow and deliberate, and Liliás followed them with anxiety.

"There's more than that to go to my letting you hear what I've got to tell you about Cuba, Miss Merivale," said the man, slipping the band off his note-book, and turning to his memoranda in a business-like way. "You shall know what I've got

to tell all right enough, I've come here for that; but I shall have to ask you a few questions first, so as to make sure of where I am, you know."

He spoke without purpose of offence, and yet Liliás felt afraid of this person.

"I don't understand you," she said, half rising from her chair. "If there are questions to be answered, I had better have a friend with me."

"Not at all," said the man coolly; "you need not be alarmed, my questions will be very harmless, and won't commit you to anything. But I wish to put them to yourself only, and the first point in the bargain I mean to propose to you, is confidence on your part."

"Bargain!"

"Yes, Miss Merivale, I used that word. I have certain information in my possession, I have reason to believe it will prove of great importance to you, and it is totally impossible for you to come at it by any other means—in short, nobody else has it to sell. I am prepared to sell it to you, under two conditions: the first is that you pay me the price I shall ask; the second is that you bind yourself to absolute secrecy with regard to that price, and to all that you may learn about me personally in the course of the transaction between us."

Doubt and fear strongly assailed Liliás. Ought she to listen to this person for a moment longer? What snare might he not be laying for her? But how could she renounce the hearing of what he pretended to be able to tell her? She rallied her courage, and said:

"Have the goodness to tell me what your name is, and what circumstance has led to your coming here."

"It is not necessary for you to learn my name at present, Miss Merivale. The circumstance that has led to my coming here

is easily explained—indeed, I have explained it already. I, and I only, have information to sell which is of value to you, and you only. You have nothing to fear from hearing me upon my own conditions; you have much to lose, however you may take my news, by dismissing me unheard."

"Go on, go on!" said Liliás.

He smiled again, and asked his first question with his eyes on the open page of his note-book.

"You are the step-daughter of the late Dr. Rosslyn, formerly of Harley Street, who died in this house two years ago, leaving a certain portion of his property to you, and all the remainder in trust for his only son, Hugh Rosslyn, who had disappeared from the city of Santiago, in Cuba, five years previously, and had not since been heard of?"

Liliás inclined her head silently.

"By the terms of Dr. Rosslyn's will, if nothing has been heard of his son within ten years after the death of the testator, and no claim has been made on the part of a child, or children of Mr. Hugh Rosslyn, the whole property goes to you at the end of that period, and is entirely at your disposition."

"That is the case."

"Nothing whatever has been heard of Mr. Hugh Rosslyn, and no claim of any kind has been made since the death of Dr. Rosslyn?"

"None—none."

"You are your own mistress? Excuse me, Miss Merivale; I mean no offence, but I must know where I am exactly. There is no one to whom you are accountable in money matters, or who can interfere with anything you like to do?"

"There is no such person."

"That is well. Now we are on even ground. There are two ways in which you might take the news that something had been heard of Mr. Hugh Rosslyn later than seven years ago, and I've got to find out which of those two ways is yours."

"Is he alive?"

Her voice was hardly audible, and her face was fixed and colourless.

"No; he isn't alive. I can go so far as that without prejudice to my bargain. But suppose he had left a will, or a claim of some kind, which you might either acknowledge or dispute as you thought fit, but which could be proved against you, so that you would have to give up some of the doctor's money, I want to know, what would you do?"

In all her agony of suspense, and in spite of the just indignation inspired by the man's words, Liliás strove to keep her judgment clear. Though the answer, "No; he isn't alive," had gone through her like a dart, she had entertained no hope of any other; it was to hear how Hugh had died she had come there, and on hearing this her soul was set. But her clear sense discerned a sinister meaning in what the man had just said. That he had some intelligence to sell to her, and in so far was not an impostor, she felt sure, although the information he had obtained concerning Dr. Rosslyn's son, and his will, was information within the reach of any enquirer. But his last words covered a suggestion that the news he had to tell might be such as she could be made to buy and conceal, for her own interest's sake!

She hid the anger that swelled her heart, and said coldly:

"Name your terms for your news, if you please. Its value to me, and the use I may make of it, is my affair. You understand, of course, that I will not pay you money until your information, be it what it may, has been authenticated."

"Not so fast, Miss Merivale—not so fast. You are completely in my hands, remember, and if I leave this house without telling you what I have come to tell you, there is no possible means by which you can get at the knowledge. As for authenticating it, you have only to hear it to be fully satisfied of its genuineness."

There was a sound of rushing water in Liliás's ears; she could bear this no longer. She sank back in her chair and clasped her hands.

"Name your terms," she repeated faintly. "If there's a claim left by my brother to anything I have, I shall be most thankful to acknowledge and meet it."

"(So, then, it's to be settled on the square!)" said the visitor to himself. "She looks like that sort of woman. There might be more to be made out of it in hush-money; but this is plainer sailing."

"The information I can give is the most important that could possibly reach you. To a certain extent you will be forced to trust me. Permit me to say that you will act wisely, and save yourself a great deal of pain by making up your mind to trust me completely, and agreeing at once to give me what I ask, on my conditions. You want to know what became of Mr.

Rosslyn; you would be disposed to carry out what would be his wishes?"

"I have no stronger desire," said Lillas.

"You will, then, be prepared to pay?"

"For Heaven's sake, don't torture me! Name your terms."

"My terms are these: I shall give you, here and now, indisputable proofs of Mr. Hugh Rosslyn's marriage and death, of the birth of his child, and her subsequent history."

"Marriage! Impossible!"

"No, no; quite possible, and quite true. I shall, in addition, undertake to place the child in your hands within any reasonable time that you may name, if you, on your part, will undertake to pay me five thousand pounds, and to keep absolute silence as to how you have obtained the information and the child, for a certain length of time to be named by me on my receiving the money from you. Of course," he added, "I shall be obliged to trust you to a certain extent, as I am aware that it will take a little time to realise the money."

Lillas was not perhaps a clever woman of business, but she was well aware that five thousand pounds was a large sum—one which no one privileged to advise would counsel her to give. This was beyond all question a case of extortion, and yet its exceptional nature placed it on a different line from the more vulgar cases that had come under her notice.

With the swiftness of thought her fancy reproduced the first agony of apprehension with regard to Hugh's fate, and the long years of suspense, whose anguish had hardly died out even yet, and she knew in her heart that there had never been an hour of all that time in which she would not cheerfully have given five thousand pounds for certain knowledge; to say nothing of the vision of consolation and joy that was evoked by this man's mention of a child, a living memorial of her beloved dead.

"Prove what you assert," she said, raising herself and fixing a steadfast look upon him, "and you shall have the money."

"And your promise of secrecy?"

"That also."

"I take your word for both, Miss Merivale; and now, if you please, I am ready to tell you the truth about Mr. Hugh Rosslyn."

Lillas signed to him to proceed, and, turning away from him, covered her face with her hands.

"With your leave," he began, in an even tone of unconcerned civility, "I will tell you, as a part of my own story, what you want to hear, for it came into my own life. In the summer of 1865, I was at Southampton, where I was acting as assistant to a general practitioner named Jones. The doctor's shop was at the corner of a street near the harbour, and the rooms over it were let as lodgings. I lived in the house with Jones and his wife. One day, in July, Jones was called out in a great hurry by a servant from an hotel, to see a lady who had been landed in an almost dying state from the incoming West Indian mail-steamer. The lady's name was Robinson, but she was evidently a foreigner. She was very pretty and very young. I soon knew all this and more about her, for the next day somebody came from the hotel and took Mrs. Jones's lodgings for her, and in the evening she was brought to the house. Mrs. Jones was not a bad sort of woman, and she pitied the young lady, who seemed frightened and dazed out of her senses; but of course she also questioned her about her means and prospects. She had a hundred pounds, all in English gold, a handsome supply of clothes, a few valuable ornaments, and the effects of her late husband, one Henry Robinson, who had perished at sea in a collision at the entrance of the Channel."

Lillas dropped her hand, turned her head sharply, and looked intently at the speaker. A day that had long been dead was struggling back to life in her mind. At that almost wild look of reviving memory the speaker paused, but she again signed to him to proceed.

"She had no friends either at the place where she had landed or anywhere else. She never went out of doors; after she had pulled through the brain-fever she brought with her, she cowered, as it were, in her own rooms, or in Mrs. Jones's parlour, and hardly ever spoke, but seemed to dread being alone. Her money went, of course, little by little, and by the time her child was born she had not much left. When she was up again, Mrs. Jones spoke to her about what she meant to do, and told her plainly she could not keep her there. She had no ideas about herself; she could not do anything to earn a living; she was quite helpless. I knew most about her; I had secretly sold a few things for her, and given her advice about the child. I was in love with her, and

when things came to a crisis I did a foolish thing. Mrs. Jones died; the lodger had to turn out—her money was gone, her means of raising any were all but exhausted. A small windfall had just come to me. I was the only friend she had in the world, and I was leaving the place; there was nothing before herself and her child but destitution. I urged those facts upon her; she was in great distress and terror, and she consented to follow me to London. I left Southampton, put up banns at a City church, took lodgings in the parish, and married Mrs. Robinson at the end of the legal time. I suppose you see it now, Miss Merivale?"

"No—I don't—I can't," stammered Lillas, while a great dread crept over her.

The day on which she had experienced her first disappointment about a letter from Hugh was now quite clear in her memory, and she could hear Dr. Rosslyn's answer to her question about the West India mail, that the steamer had met with a collision in the Channel and a passenger had been lost, but the mail was all right. Was it, then, true, that in that question and answer had lain the solution of the mystery—that all had been over with Hugh before they ever had an anxious thought about him? She could not sort or clear her ideas; all was incoherent recollection and growing fear.

"The man calling himself Henry Robinson, who was lost at sea, was Mr. Hugh Rosslyn, and the foreign lady whom I married was his widow."

Lillas uttered no sound; her eyes were dilated with horror and amazement. The man tapped his breast-pocket, and Lillas heard the rustle of papers.

"The proofs are here," he said. "You shall see them presently. My wife never told me much about her family; they had cast her off, and she had nothing to hope from them. She had gone off with Mr. Rosslyn from Cuba on board an American ship, and they were married at Jamaica. The proofs of this are here also."

"What was her name?"

"A romantic one: Ines de Rodas."

"Impossible! Ines de Rodas, the girl whom my brother was to have married, is, if she be still living, in a convent at Santiago. Of that we obtained positive information from her own family. On this point, at all events, you are making a false statement."

She spoke firmly and with a note of anger in her voice.

"I can't tell or guess why her family told you such a falsehood, Miss Merivale, but I assure you, if you think it worth while to make enquiry after you have seen what I shall show you, that they will not persist in it. Allow me to proceed. The story of my domestic life would have no interest for you, so I will pass it by. It was not happy and it was not prosperous. My wife cared for nothing but her child and her past; nothing that I touched succeeded with me. I grew tired of her—I don't deny that—and after a long run of bad luck and a long spell of poverty and discord, I could stand it no longer, and I got a berth as doctor to an emigrant-ship from Liverpool to New York, and turned my back on England. I did not do this until I had tried everything. There was no use in staying to look on while she and the child starved, and she would not have thanked me."

"You have not to excuse or justify yourself to me," said Lillas severely. "If your story is true, why did not this poor woman come to Dr. Rosslyn, or to me, in her distress? She would naturally have done so in the first instance. And, again, why should my brother have taken a false name?"

"I freely confess I cannot answer that question. They were safe from pursuit; they were on board an English ship. You beat me there, Miss Merivale; but the point has nothing to do with my credibility. As for your other objection, it is easy to meet. She had never heard your name, though Mr. Rosslyn had spoken of a sister, and she would not have ventured to appeal to Dr. Rosslyn, because she knew that his son expected him to be incensed at his marriage."

"That could not have held good against the claims and the wants of her child—of my brother's child. However little else she knew, she did know my father's name; she would have made some sign to him. And you, too," she added, with a plainly disconcerting effect on her hearer; "can you expect me to believe that you knew who Dr. Rosslyn was, knew that he was ignorant of his son's fate, and abstained from applying to him, on your own behalf, when you might have established so strong a claim by bringing his son's child to him?"

"I knew nothing at all about Dr. Rosslyn until after I had married his son's widow," answered the man sullenly. "I never knew her name was not Robinson until she had

consented to follow me to London, and I might not have known the fact at all had she not been afraid that if she married me under a false name she would not be legally my wife. Of course, I could not afterwards urge a claim upon Dr. Rosslyn which she shrank from pressing."

"In the face of destitution, and with his son's child to urge it for! No; you cannot persuade me of this; it is the weak point in your story."

"I shall leave it then," said the man in a tone of slightly-veiled mockery. "It matters little among so many strong ones. I proceed, passing over the years of my absence—for I remained in the United States—and coming to the present time. I returned to England a few months ago nearly as poor as I left it, but got into some newspaper work through the interest of an old acquaintance. One day I had to look up a will at Somerset House. The testator's name was Rosslyn. I had seen the announcement of the death of Dr. Rosslyn, of Harley Street, in an English paper, at New Orleans, and I was reminded of it by the coincidence. I read the doctor's will also, and found that my step-daughter is entitled by its provisions to a handsome fortune. Have I satisfied you, Miss Merivale, that I am no impostor?"

"I don't know; I can't tell," said Liliás, in keen distress. "I am distracted. I believe you, and yet I can't believe you."

"I quite understand; but you will end by believing me fully. My story is nearly ended. My immediate business on learning what I had learnt, was to discover my wife and her daughter. I did discover them, but I arrived at the place where they were too late. My wife was dead. This circumstance is not of any importance in the matter between you and me. Your brother's child lives to claim and enjoy her rights, and every word that I have told you is the truth."

"What had befallen your wife in your absence?"

"That I cannot say, except as regards the last few months of her life. She had been supporting herself by needlework, but her health broke, and a lady who took an interest in her had got her into a 'Home' of an uncommon kind, at a place called Little Choughton."

Liliás sprang up with a cry:

"You are James Willesden!"

The man started back.

"I am James Willesden. But how do you know that?"

"Because the 'Home' is mine; because Lislee is my house, and Colonel Courtland is my tenant; because I have heard the story of your wife's death and of all your conduct from Mrs. Courtland. All is clear now—all is clear now!"

Dismay was plainly to be read upon Willesden's features, but Liliás read it not. He sat motionless, crestfallen, and silent, while she paced the room in an agony of grief. Was not Fate too hard upon her? She had been so near all these years to the woman whom Hugh had loved, and she had not known it. She had unwittingly given her shelter and succour, but she had never seen her, and now "fair Ines" must be always only a shadow to her. If she had gone down to the cottage and seen the dying woman, the deserted wife, would some casual word have led to an explanation? Would her Spanish origin, her foreign beauty, or any subtle instinct of Liliás's own have revealed the truth? No! how could any of these things have done so when she believed Ines de Rodas to be a cloistered nun? Dead! Both dead! Hugh, in his deep sea-grave, not murdered, thank Heaven!—even in these first moments she could feel the relief of that knowledge—and Ines in the peaceful English churchyard. Hugh's father, too; the stern, unsympathetic man who had, somehow, died slowly of the mysterious fate of his only son—all gone! Why cumbered she, Liliás, the ground? She had forgotten the man who had brought her this news, until a sudden thought occurred to her. She paused opposite to him and said:

"Where, then, is my brother's child? The little girl whom you took away from Lislee is your own."

"Pardon me, Miss Merivale," said Willesden, recovering himself, "I have now another explanation to make to you. Greatly as I am surprised to find that you are aware of all that passed at Lislee, I am equally glad of it. It is full confirmation of my statement, if you wanted any. But it places no bar to my claims—remember that; and it does not release you from your promise of secrecy. The child whom I took away from Lislee is Maria Dolores Rosslyn, your brother's daughter—her mother's only child. From the time of our marriage, my wife called the infant by my name, and she was brought up to regard me as her father. My wife had made this a condition; I did not object. I was not bound to explain matters to Colonel Courtland; it suited my purpose

that the child should not be traced; it was nobody's business but my own."

The eagerness in his tone did not escape her.

"I repeat, Mr. Willesden," she said, "that you are not bound to excuse yourself to me."

"And I repeat that this coincidence cannot alter the terms of our bargain. You have now got from me all I undertook to supply you with. Are you prepared to keep your word?"

"As regards the secrecy you exact, that is impossible. Colonel and Mrs. Courtland must learn the facts, for they will recognise the child."

"I shall not care for that after the stipulated time is past. I am making a fresh start in life by this bargain with you, and I don't want to be hampered by my past. You shall never see or hear of me again after my business with you is over."

"You will not attempt any future interference with the child?"

"Certainly not. I shall probably leave England at once, but at any rate I shall not cross your path. Now, let me repeat my conditions. I will place the child, and all the documents, which you shall presently see, in your hands, on a day to be named by yourself, here, or at any other place you may appoint, on receipt of five thousand pounds in Bank of England notes. On your part you undertake to keep the transaction secret for one week after the child is with you."

"You have done a bold thing," said Lilius impulsively, "to tell me all this, and trust me for the price of it."

"Not at all. You have no proof, and if you tried to trick me, I should deny the whole thing, adhere to the statement I made at Lisle, and do as I might please with your brother's child."

"No more—no more," said Lilius, raising her hand unconsciously, as though to thrust him away; "let me see the papers."

Willesden produced them. They consisted of a certificate of the marriage of Hugh Rosslyn and Ines de Rodas by a Catholic priest at Kingston, Jamaica; an extract from the baptismal register of the parish church at Southampton, to which Mrs. Jones had carried her lodger's infant to be christened, while its mother lay, to all appearance, dying; a copy of the certificate of the marriage of James Willesden with Inez Rosslyn; and another document, that had been folded up in a small compass. Willesden removed its cover,

but Lilius saw that it was a leaf torn from a sketch-book, and asked him to let her look at it. Slightly, but cleverly indicated on the paper were the lines of a bay, a mountain range, and a harbour with shipping. In the corner was a neatly-drawn star, in which she recognised Hugh's "mark". Here was, indeed, evidence.

"This," said Willesden, "was the only paper belonging to Mr. Rosslyn in my wife's possession." He placed before Lilius the last letter written by herself, which Hugh had received at Santiago.

"I presume you are quite satisfied, Miss Merivale?" said Willesden, after he had carefully replaced the papers in his pocket.

"I am quite satisfied. If you will meet me in the general waiting-room at London Bridge Railway Station on this day week, at twelve o'clock, bringing with you the child and these papers, you shall receive the money you demand then and there. And, now, be so good as to leave me."

Postscript (later by a week and a day). From Walter Ritchie to Colonel Courtland.

"I was in the neighbourhood of Praed Street to-day, and made enquiry about Willesden and the child. I regret to tell you that they are off; no one knows where. Willesden left his lodgings at eleven o'clock, taking the child and all his belongings. He had given the woman of the house no notice, but paid a week's rent in advance. He told her he was going abroad."

CERVANTES.

"BLESSINGS on the man who invented sleep," says Sancho Panza; "Blessings on him who invented Sancho Panza," say all who have entered heart and soul into the story of "the ingenious gentleman, Don Quixote, of La Mancha." And how few they are! Everybody talks of "Don Quixote"; everybody agrees that a man who hasn't read it is little better than a boor. But then everybody talks about Milton; and the readers of *Paradise Lost* are few and far between. We talk of the great men of the past; but we read—what reading-time the newspapers and society journals and magazines leave us—the little men of the present. Don Quixote we treat rather better. Most of us have, in our schoolboy days, conned some wretched little translation, with little or nothing of the racy original in it. That is why we have

not cared to follow up an acquaintance with Cervantes's masterpiece. We were disappointed; we knew enough to carry us decently through life—all about the windmills and the wine-skins, and Mambrino's helmet, and the voyage to Barataria; and how Cardenio and Don Quixote quarrel over the history of Don Rugel, of Greece, and the relations between the quack, Master Elisabad, and that exalted Princess, Queen Madasima; and so we allowed the time to go by for ever in which we might, with profit as well as pleasure, have got to know and love our Don Quixote. If you want to enjoy Don Quixote, therefore, get him in a good translation, such as Mr. Duffield's or Mr. Ormsby's.

Probably you would not like old Shelton, whose hurried work (he boasts of having finished the first part in forty days) is barbarously literal, and yet full of blunders. And the next English translation, that by Phillips, Milton's nephew, which he calls "Don Quixote made English according to the humour of our language", quite deserves what Mr. Ormsby says of it; it is "a travesty that for coarseness, vulgarity, and buffoonery is almost unexampled, even in the literature of the Restoration." It may be classed with Ward's "merry translation into Hudibrastic verse", and eschewed in like manner. It was these men's flippancy that made Jervas, friend of Pope, Swift, and the rest, fall into the opposite error of "woodenness". He felt (as Mr. Ormsby puts it) that "it is a crime to bring Cervantes forward grinning at his own good things"; and that the essence of Quixotic humour is the unsmiling gravity with which these good things are said and listened to.

What an instance of Spanish gravity is that true tale of the foreigner who was relating in a Madrid conversazione the old story of Adam coming back to the earth! He landed in Italy, and was perplexed to see how different most things were from what he remembered of antediluvian times. In Germany his astonishment grew apace; in France he was fairly bewildered; and when he got to England he really thought he must be in another planet; not a single thing could he understand. But the next place he went to was Spain, and here he was delighted to find himself quite at home, so little change had come over it since the sun first shone on its sierras. This, which was meant as satire on Spanish want of improvement, was taken as a compliment, and a distinguished

gentleman, thanking the speaker, replied: "Yes, sir; Adam was right, for Spain is Paradise." A Spaniard indeed says: "Quien dice España dice todo" (he who says Spain says everything); but, despite all that assertion of peninsular pre-eminence, he does not bate one jot of his provincialism.

Well, of our other "classical" translations, Smollett's was no doubt chiefly from the French; so that we had best put them all aside, and form our opinion of what good judges—Lord Macaulay among them—have called "the best novel in the world beyond all comparison" from the newest—who in this case is also the worthiest—translator. Best novel or not, Don Quixote did—what one book has seldom done—the work it was meant to do. It gave the death-blow, not to chivalry, but to the sham chivalry which had succeeded it. The feeling was very strong in every sensible Spanish mind that for people to feed on fifth-rate imitations of Amadis de Gaul and Don Belianis of Greece could only do harm. In 1589, Fray Juan de Tolosa attacked this literature from the religious side. He wrote "to drive out of our Spain that dust-cloud of books of chivalries as they call them, of knaveries as I call them, which blind those men's eyes who, not reflecting on the harm they are doing their souls, give themselves up to them, and waste the best part of the year in striving to learn whether this knight took the enchanted castle, and that one, after all his battles, celebrated the marriage he was bent upon." Wise men groaned under the feeling that many had brought themselves to think and act in the very style of the books they read. Spain was full of idlers who thought it the proper thing to waste their days in acting out the sillinesses and the sins of romance. Mr. Ormsby—to quote him once again, and this paper owes much to him—reminds us of what Don Felix Pacheco says in Defoe's true story—not a novel—"Captain George Carleton": "Before Cervantes's book appeared, it was next to impossible to walk the streets with any delight or without danger. So many cavaliers were seen prancing before their mistresses' windows, that a stranger would have imagined the whole nation to have been nothing less than a race of knights-errant. But after the world had read that notable book, the man who ventured abroad in that once celebrated drapery was pointed at as a Don Quixote, and found himself the jest of high and low." Of course

romance had become, to a great extent, a thorough sham—a mere Carlylian “wind-bag”, else Cervantes’s wit-needle could never have pricked it. They claim for him that “he wrought a revolution in the manners and literature of Europe, banishing the dreams of chivalry, and reviving a turn for the simplicity of nature.” I am not certain that he has not done harm as well as good. The knight-errant had a noble ideal—

To ride about redressing human wrong ;

and I cannot agree with Mr. Ormsby that Don Quixote is not a sad book. To me it is inexpressibly sad—nothing in it sadder than where the released galley-slaves stone their liberator and his squire. Cervantes, who knew what a galley-slave had to bear, felt that even the worst of rogues ought not to be treated in that way. How to treat them he did not see ; so he made Don Quixote set them free on the high-road and suffer for it. Moral : “Do not try to crush out enthusiasm ; there is far too little of it in the world. Regulate it.”

“Better false sentiment than none at all,” a good many will say who shut their eyes to the seamy side of the good old times ; just as a good many find the grossest superstition better than atheism or agnosticism. And they are both so far right that in all human things there is, and must be, a mixture of unreality. We are mostly such sluggards that we have to work ourselves up into action with some kind of excitement ; and excitement nearly always partakes in some way of the unreal. Just now, I must say, those who call for enthusiasm and deplore the death or decay of romance have a remarkably good case. There is in France, under the so-called naturalistic school of Zola, a recrudescence of grossness which makes us wish that Cervantes had not so strongly turned the laugh against ideals which, rightly used, do doubtless preserve to the salt of the earth its savour. But Cervantes could not see this. He had had too much of shams in his life. He had seen Pope and King, Cardinals and Prime-Ministers, selfishly worrying about wretched trifles, while things so important as the welfare of whole nations were going to the bad. He had heard a crusade preached with much unction, amid the chanting of litanies and shouting of Christian warcries ; and it had turned out to be a job, in which the interests of the allies, and not the extension of Christendom, came first and foremost. He had tasted the bitterness of captivity in a pirate’s den which, by one

well-directed effort, the Venetians or the King of all the Spains could have destroyed at once. He saw the working of the Holy Office of the Inquisition—saw how it was made an engine of oppression, the most deadening that perhaps the world has ever suffered under. Hence we cannot expect him to be tender to shams. He was soured ; he had done a man’s work for his country and suffered much in her cause, and he saw carpet-knights in high places and crawling toadies in comfortable berths, and found himself, when past middle life, left to the chance compassion of a private patron.

You can rarely understand a man’s work without knowing something about his life ; in this case such knowledge is essential. Cervantes lived in an atmosphere of shams, religious, political, and social. Spain was settling down into that life in death, that fool’s paradise, which must have been a purgatory for all thinking Spaniards, and which lasted till Napoleon burst in upon her. The religious and political shams he dared not attack. He had been in a Spanish prison, and did not care to repeat the experiment. His satirical sonnet on the Duke of Medina’s triumphant entry into Cadiz, just after Essex had plundered it, shows what he might have done in that way ; but it was safer to confine himself to attacking social shams and follies. Here he had the clergy with him, as well as what practical good sense was left in the nation. That is how the first part of Don Quixote came to be written. The second part would never have been finished—for Cervantes was a procrastinator, and much preferred his dramas, which never got a hearing even in his lifetime, to the work which was to make him immortal—but for the impudent fraud of someone, probably the King’s confessor, a Dominican, who wrote a sequel to Don Quixote, under the magniloquent sobriquet of “the Licentiate Alonzo Fernandez de Avellaneda de Tordesillas”. Avellaneda is dull and coarse, and would never have been heard of but that Cervantes fell upon him with all the savageness of Ben Jonson and all the incisiveness of Pope. The strange thing is that some men of mark, Le Sage, who wrote *Gil Blas*, for instance, have had the perversity to prefer his book to the real Don Quixote. But this only shows how low French taste had fallen in Le Sage’s day.

Cervantes was a man of old family. Spanish writers delight to trace him

back to Nuña Alfonso, of Toledo, who, under Alfonso the Seventh, did almost as much against the Moors as the Cid had done half a century before. He built himself a castle which he called Cervatos, from an old family estate in the Montana or Basque land, and when he died, in 1143, his eldest son called himself De Cervatos (men were beginning to be called after their estates) much to the younger son Gonzalo's annoyance. Gonzalo, a great warrior under Ferdinand the Third, in the war which took from the Moors Seville and Cordova, and penned them up in Grenada, called himself De Cervantes, from the Castle of San Servando, or San Cervantes, at Toledo, which no one who goes there can help seeing on the height just above the famous Bridge of Alcantara. This castle his great-grandfather is said to have had a share in building; and this younger branch outlasted the Cervatos, and still exists in Mexico and Columbia.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, great-grandson of Diego, a Commander of the Order of Santiago, was born at Alcalá, in 1547, probably on St. Michael's Day. Alcalá, now so deserted, was then a busy, populous town, its university rivalling Salamanca, its open-air stage-plays giving young Miguel the love for the drama which he dilates on in the preface to his comedies, and which successive failures did not avail to quench. Of his early training we know nothing. Spain was flooded with chap-books about chivalry, the frontispieces portraying knights in such wondrous plumes and panoply that even Charles the Fifth's German Ritters (a common sight, then, in Spain) were nothing to them. Mr. Ormsby thinks of the boy as laughing at these odd figures, and thinking how one of them would frighten the old women and scatter the turkeys if he came charging into the plaza.

In those days, young men of family looked to a patron; and Miguel found one in Cardinal Acquaviva, who took him to Rome as his chamberlain. But it was a stirring time; Spain, Venice, and the Pope were, for a brief moment, banded together against the Turk; and warlike enthusiasm laid such hold of Cervantes, that he resigned his office, and enlisted as a private with those who sailed, in 1571, from Messina, to look out for the Turkish fleet. Everybody knows how they found it at Lepanto; and in Don John of Austria's victory, Cervantes, though down with fever, determined to have a

share. "If you leave your berth," said the doctor, "I'll not answer for the consequences." "Better die," replied the sick man, "than not do something for God and King." His galley was in the thick of it; and before the fight was over he was shot thrice—twice in the breast, once in the left arm. Next day, Don John, looking round at the wounded, saw him, and added three crowns to his pay. Despite his buoyant temper, wounds and fever kept him in hospital seven months; and he only came out just in time to take part in the capture of Tunis. For his bravery during this campaign Don John gave him a letter to the King, recommending him to the command of a company; but on his way to Spain he was captured by Algerine pirates, and, as the letter showed him to be a person of distinction, so high a ransom was put on him that the Redemptorist Father, who was then unconsciously playing into the hands of the Algerines by philanthropically raising ransom-money for Christians, could not get anything like the needful sum.

This was probably the beginning of Cervantes's cynicism; here was Philip wasting blood and treasure in vainly trying to bring the Low Countries back to the true faith, while Spaniards who had shed their blood for him were left captives in a pirates' nest, which a few thousand men could easily tear out. Hopeless of ransom, Cervantes tried several times to escape; and the puzzle is how Dey Hassan, who used to own that he was afraid of the crippled prisoner, refrained from hanging or impaling him. These attempts show a wonderful power of influencing others. Once, for instance, he arranged that his brother Rodrigo, who being of small account, had been soon ransomed, should bring over a ship and take away him and as many more as could be got on board. And then comes the wonder of the story; for, in a garden on the shore, he and the gardener managed to build a hiding-place, to which he brought, one by one, fourteen fellow-captives, feeding them for several months by the help of a renegade, who turned traitor just as Rodrigo's ship hove in sight. The gardener was hanged, and the Dey bought Cervantes for five hundred crowns of his Arnaut master, of whom, by the way, the proverb went that he had a houseful of noseless and earless Christians. Another time, when Cervantes tried to get help from the Governor of Oran, his Moorish letter-bearer was caught and impaled, but to him nothing was done. A third time, aided by

two Valencian merchants living in Algiers, he bought a ship in which he and sixty more were to escape. But here, too, the inevitable traitor ruined all. A priest, Dr. Juan Blanco de Paz, jealous of the esteem in which Cervantes was held, and of his wonderful power over his fellow-captives, betrayed him at the last moment. The merchants were so terribly afraid lest under torture he should compromise them that they wanted to get him away on board a trading-vessel that was just setting sail. "I will not go," said he, "without the others who were to have escaped with me. But don't you fear; nothing will ever make me bring anyone else into danger;" and he at once gave himself up to the Dey, whose first word was, "Name your accomplices." And to emphasise the order, he put a halter round Cervantes's neck, and had his hands tied behind him. "I had none," was the reply, "but four gentlemen, who have since escaped. The sixty were not to be told anything about it till everything was ready." What could the Dey do with such a man? Torturing was no use; and, Turk though he was, he must have admired this prisoner, whom no force could subdue, and whom no disappointment could discourage. Whatever might be the cause, Cervantes lived on, and, soon after, plotted a rising of all the twenty-five thousand Christian prisoners. They were to overpower the Turks and seize the city; this, betrayed like his other plans, instead of bringing him to a speedy end, was the means of his recovering his freedom. The Dey suddenly lowered his ransom one half; and the Redemptorist, Juan Gil, managed to raise the money, and sent him home after a captivity of five years all but a week.

His first trouble after his return is eminently characteristic of the times. De Paz, who had got attached to the Inquisition, solely, it would seem, in order to wreak his revenge on Cervantes, brought against him charges of misconduct during captivity. Happily Father Gil was in Algiers; and he got eleven of the chief captives to state before a notary how Cervantes had behaved all through. The document, still extant, is one that would draw tears from a stone. Through the dry, formal language, love, gratitude, and admiration struggle to express themselves: "In him this deponent found father and mother;" "With me the aforesaid shared his poor purse even till he had emptied it;" "We the undersigned, who else would have sunk in our down-

heartedness, were by the aforesaid cheered and upheld;" and so on. Thanks to this testimony, Cervantes got out of De Paz's clutches, and, being penniless, joined his regiment, and saw service in the Azores—not as a captain—for Don John was dead, and he had no one to push his claims—but as a private. A poor prospect this for a man of nearly forty; so, having used his trick of rhyming as a solace during his captivity, he took to letters, beginning with a pastoral romance, *Galatea*, published in 1585. Then he married a lady with a full Spanish equipment of names and a tiny fortune, to which he certainly did not add by plays like the *Numancia*. This was a grand historic drama; but what he was proudest of were his comedies. An agreement is extant between him and a manager for six of them at fifty ducats (six pounds) apiece, "not to be paid unless it appeared on representation that the play was one of the best ever set on a Spanish stage"! This good opinion of himself belongs to the hopefulness which kept him alive, maimed of one hand though he was, during those five years. Meanwhile, he had been made deputy-purveyor to the Invincible Armada—an office so ill paid that he petitioned for a post in Spanish America. His petition was, Spanish fashion, referred to some official in the India Office—i.e., it was shelved, until some archive-searcher found it not many years ago. Had he gone to America, we should never have had Don Quixote. As it was, he got appointed a revenue-collector, and, remitting his moneys by a merchant who became bankrupt, he was found a defaulter, and imprisoned. The story goes that he began Don Quixote while in prison, because, in his preface, he calls his work "a dry, shrivelled, whimsical offspring, just what might be begotten in a prison where every misery is lodged". But his imprisonment did not last long. His deficit, being only some twenty pounds, was soon made up; and the story of his being afterwards put in prison—every one of his commentators gives a different reason—seems apocryphal, though at Argamasilla they show the very cellar in which he was shut up. Anyhow, Argamasilla is Don Quixote's village. No other in all La Mancha agrees with the description, and, as early as 1608, it is named by Quevedo as the place. In the church are the portraits of a hidalgo whom tradition makes the original of Cervantes's hero, and of his daughter, by some accounts the cause of the second imprisonment—in

which imprisonment, Hartzembusch, an enthusiastic German, Cervantes's Halliwell, believed so thoroughly that, twenty years ago, he printed his two editions in the arched cellaraforesaid. While going his tax-gathering rounds, Cervantes was doubtless jotting down the touches of colour and character which he worked up so inimitably—the ox-tail with the landlord's comb stuck in it; the recruit singing as he tramped along with his breeches in his bundle; the reapers in the Venta gateway listening while someone read Felixmarte de Hircania. Strange that, whereas most men know when they are writing well, and enjoy doing it, he, though he had Barataria and the Duchess in his brain, should have kept on stringing poor rhymes and artfully framing worthless plays and pastorals!

Was Cervantes a pleasant fellow, with his "smooth brow, aquiline features, chestnut hair, and bright, cheerful eyes"? It is his portrait of himself, and surely the testimony of his fellow-captives agrees therewith. From what they say, one would pronounce him the most loveable of men; and yet, such is the temper of the "genus irritabile" that, except Quevedo, who was his junior, he had very few friends. The "culture" men, headed by Gongora, kept up on him a fire of sneers, which he met with counter-sneers. One might have expected better things from Lope de Vega, whose wondrous fertility Cervantes had extolled: "Here's a meadow (vega) that daily gives fresh fruits." But, when the first part of Don Quixote was going about in MS., Lope said, "No one can be so silly as to write in praise of it"; and his opinion, echoed by the little world of Spanish authors, made Robles, the Madrid publisher, so careless that he did not secure the copyright. Whence Lope's anger? He resented Cervantes's criticism on the new school of drama; and, further, he wrote for the aristocracy, who, though they practically disowned the chivalry of their ancestors, could not bear to have it laughed at.

But as soon as the book was published all this was changed. Edition followed edition, both in and out of Spain, and yet the author's promise of a second part was not fulfilled, and, till Avellaneda stirred him up, Cervantes went on with his plays—"having fought," says Mr. Ormsby, "at the Spanish Salamis, he was bent on being the Æschylus of Spain"—and paying his way, not by what he got for them, but by drafting petitions, drawing up statements

of claims, and doing other scrivening, helped by the needlework of his numerous womankind—his wife, a natural daughter, a widowed sister and her daughter, and another sister. And so he followed the Court, to be at hand when wanted by petitioners, moving from Seville to Valladolid, and thence to Madrid, helped, too, by his good friends the Count of Lemos and the Archbishop of Toledo, and just in time to hurriedly finish his great romance before death seized him in what was then a fashionable street, close by where Lope and also Quevedo lived and died.

SNOWDROP.

THE time of Candlemas is here,
The holly wreaths are brown and sere,
And dead the mistletoe;
The birthday of the year is past,
The baby year that grew so fast
Through January snow.
The changeable year, so like a child,
That now is froward, now is wild,
Must turn to graver things:
The growing year has work to do,
The face of Nature to renew,
As in the bygone springs.
My darling with the laughing eye,
Put pretty toy and trinket by,
And nestle at my knee;
I promised once in merry hour,
That I would choose a special flower,
Thy token sweet to be.
Take thou thy token, it is here,
First blossom of the budding year,
A snowdrop green and white;
Take thou thy token, may it be
A messenger through life to thee
Of innocent delight.
It is the first-born of the flowers,
An earnest of spring's budding bowers
While yet the world is drear;
The little year's first timid gift,
When wintry skies begin to lift,
And working-days draw near.
Look, love, how fair it is, how pure,
How frail, yet able to endure
The winter's wildest blast!
Ah, child! be thy fast-coming youth,
White with the purity of truth,
In courage rooted fast.
The snowdrop comes when Christmas joys
Are past and gone, like broken toys
Put by in riper years:
May some white blessing, God-sent, crown
Thee, darling, when thou layest down
Thy childhood's hopes and fears!
Then take the snowdrop for thy flower,
God gift it with a magic power,
With meanings wide and deep!
Life may have roses red in store,
But in thine heart for evermore,
Thine own white snowdrop keep!

A FAROE FETE DAY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

It was the 29th of July, and I had just come downstairs from between the two feather-beds which had kept me hot

through the night, when my landlady met me in the passage with a flush on her cheeks.

"You must go to make quick, if you wish for to see what occurs in the church. It is once a year it happens only, and it is to-day that it is. And see how the people from the other islands are coming in! Here is the tenth boat since nine o'clock, and it is going half-nine. And all full, too! Oh, Thorshavn will be a fine place this day, with so many people in her! And such dancing as there will have to-night you never see!"

Having shot these words at me with amazing speed, considering her imperfect acquaintance with idiomatic English, my landlady bounced out of sight. A minute afterwards I heard her tongue rattling in company with several Faroemen, and my name sounded like a bell in a storm—the only syllable of her outpouring that I could understand. I believe she was telling her associates that I was the laziest Englishman she had ever had the honour of accommodating in her house.

I had not been in Thorshavn three days, but that was long enough for me to know that St. Olaf's Day is a considerable festival throughout the Faroes. It is Parliament Day, and there is much dancing in the evening, and, indeed, all through the small hours, until full day again absorbs the lingering twilight of a northern night in July.

And all the time she was preparing my breakfast my landlady prattled on about the excitements of the day, her memories of past 29ths of July, the number of glasses of wine that would be drunk in Thorshavn ere the day was over, and her surmises as to whether young Sören of Eide, young Petersen of Naalsøe, and young Bjørnsen of Klaksvig would, in the course of the eventful evening, finally come to the point with Olivina, Friga, and Petra—something or other. St. Olaf's Day is a sort of Valentine's Day, it seems, only that in Faroe there is much less irresponsible frivolity than in England.

In the midst of my landlady's chatter in rushed a little boy, with his red Faroe cap ungallantly on his head, and said something shrilly to my landlady.

"It's the gunboat!" she exclaimed, for my information. "Gracious goodness, what a scene there will have! She come in in the night, and lie up in the other bay, and the captain—he's a rale good man—he will go to the church in his

uniform, and so there'll be something more to be saw than general."

"And Jan Winter, from the Shetlands," continued the boy, now speaking English, which he had learnt very well in the Thorshavn school, "he want a bed this night; and Niels Brat, he also; and Amelia Jonas, from Suderoe—she come in the smack with the rest—and she, too, desire you to give her a bed."

But now my landlady's growing impatience burst its bounds.

"And how in heaven can I give they beds, you senseless child, when the Englishman here have got them all——"

I was about to ask for an explanation of this charge, for it did not seem becoming that the little boy should spread such a calumny through the town, when my landlady's storekeeper appeared with a radiant face, and gave me a card.

"There will be much good to eat," he said; "and I wish it was me."

Then, under the interested gaze of my landlady, the man, and the boy, I read on the card that I was invited to a supper that night by the Governor of the Faroes in the Lagthing's House, or House of Parliament. I was very pleased, and said as much.

"Well, it will be a day, that's all," commented my landlady.

"Yes; not another like it till the next year be come round," remarked the storekeeper.

"And the sun, it break through the fog—look!" cried the boy, running towards the window, whence could be seen a faint silvery gleam on the hither water in the little rock-bound harbour, and the hulls of two schooners, whose masts were still in the clouds.

But what now enthralled the eyes of my friends more than the dispersing fog or the shining water under the fog, were the boats on the shingle some ten yards from our door, and the crowd of men and women in gala dresses strolling thence into the streets of the town. And before I could say another word, my landlady, the storekeeper, and the boy had gone through the door, and were chattering like girls with their respective friends from other parts of the isles.

After breakfast I climbed the narrow winding street on to the breezy track leading towards the fort or prison of Thorshavn. The mist had gone by this. The sea was blue and still; the dark triangular peak of Naalsøe Island, three miles from

the shore, looked superb; the schooners and other vessels in the bay showed their respective flags in honour of the day; and, looking back, the coterie of grass-roofed black and grey bodied little houses of Thorshavn, half swathed in their blue peat-smoke which lay over them like a cloud, was also gay with a score of flags, which lazily unfolded themselves for one moment to droop inertly the next.

Many of the new arrivals from other isles were, like myself, taking a walk amid the upland meadows of the town, with the sea for a spectacle on one side, and the Thorshavnkine, tethered each in the middle of his little patch, dotting the green spaces on the other side. Not that they had eyes for the picturesque. It were hardly to be expected of Faroemen, born and bred in the fog, and living of necessity active lives. But they were extraordinarily happy, all of them, judged by the riot of their laughter and the radiance of their faces. And the Faroe maids were no less so. These, for a head-dress, had a black silk handkerchief drawn tightly across their crown, and allowed to fall in a point behind. For the rest, each of them wore a shawl of the gayest conceivable colours just covering her shoulders; and such of them as had good hair, showed a brace of well-plaited and ribboned pigtails reposing on the parti-coloured wool. Their gowns were soberer; but as they walked, from beneath their skirts, their small feet stole forth daintily, shod in bright yellow lambskin mocassins.

The track passed three wooden seats, set up by the municipality, where the view of Naalsoe over the sea is best. The seats were cut and carved with initials and phrases like an English school-desk. But, on this occasion, not a letter of the alphabet was visible; Faroe men and maids covered every inch of the seats. A little farther, and we came in sight of the headlands and mountains of the more distant isles. Hence one might count five capes of dark cliffs, running seawards from the mainland in a southeasterly direction, and one in particular, higher than the rest, and all but precipitous. More inland, the mountains showed fantastically purple-grey under the clearing light. A spot of snow, under the brow of one of them, gleamed like an eye. One other, the highest of all, had a tiny band of snowy cloud round his crown, which rose above it like a bald pate. The loftiest of Faroe's peaks is barely three thousand feet in height; but, with no near standard to

judge them by, they are as effective as if they were twice as high.

In company with the others, I was enjoying this prospect, when a sudden hush of tongues made me look aside. The Faroe girls were smoothing their dresses or feeling if their pigtails were in good condition; while, now and again, they glanced in the direction of the rocks in front. Following their gaze, I saw a gentleman in a black gown, with an Elizabethan ruff about his neck and a black cloth hat on his head. He was bounding from boulder to boulder with the agility of a Faroe sheep. And, indeed, his experience of the country was as wide as that of most sheep in the neighbourhood; for I soon recognised him as the Dean of the Isles. He was a Faroeman in every sense. The men raised their caps, the women curtsied; and, having acknowledged their civilities, the dean stepped briskly ahead towards the town. It was time, moreover, for the bell of the Thorshavn church had already been ringing blithely for five minutes, and the dean was the most essential personage—after the Governor of the Isles—at the solemn service which was to precede the inauguration of Parliament. And so we followed in the dean's footsteps.

The church of Thorshavn has, externally, none of the graces of antiquity. It is of wood, whitewashed, with a tower showing the face of an untruthful clock, and a top-heavy vane over the clock. It stands in a little churchyard; and from the simple graves you look over the larger bay of Thorshavn, towards the tiny village of Arge, on the coast, the iron headland of Glovornees, and the hills where they rise, cumbered irregularly with rocks, betwixt Thorshavn and Kirkeboe, to the height of some twelve hundred feet. A few yards from the west end of the church the ground falls abruptly to a cove filled with fishing-boats, and bordered by two or three of Thorshavn's chief merchant establishments, into whose warehouses files of burden-bearing men, with bent backs, go all day long from the little pier. But, with a strong south-east wind, the water tumbles into this inlet with a vigour and noise that makes such work impossible. At such a time the boats are drawn high out of reach of harm, and the merchants shut their doors and bolt them.

To-day, however, the water was placid and bright; and it was the brighter for the scarlet and white colours of the flags which fluttered gently from the masts of the

schooners in this bay also. Five hundred yards from shore lay the Danish gunboat, the *Diana*, whose arrival had so stirred my landlady. She is only a little ship, but a smart one; and the smarter this morning for the clothes from yesterday's wash, which, slung from mast to mast, look like decorations responsive to those of the town itself. Strains of music from the gunboat come over the water, and caught us at the door of the church, where a score of muscular men were lingering until the last moment. They are playing the Danish National Anthem in honour of the day, and, while they played, we saw a boat being lowered, and the ceremonious descent thereinto of a gentleman, heavy with epaulettes, and with a cocked-hat upon his head. This was the captain of the gunboat, and he was to lend his presence to the scene in the church.

Led by the little boy of the morning, I now entered the church. Thirty or forty silent men and women were in the ante-room. As strangers, they may have been too nervous to go farther, though Faroese physique ought to be ignorant of its nerves. Perhaps, however, they were waiting for the organ to be still. A sad voluntary, played with enthusiasm, sounded a little odd.

The church was already nearly full. The leading citizens and merchants, with their families, sat in the gallery and in front of the nave, while the rest of the nave was devoted to the use of the fishermen, day-labourers, peat-gatherers, etc., who, in any community less democratic than the Faroes, would be termed the lower classes. Round about the organ in the western gallery were a score or so of boys and girls with Saxon faces, and rather vacant expressions. These were the choir; and, preliminary to their time for work, they were chattering like the boys of an English cathedral school. But it was towards the east end of the church that most eyes were turned. There, by the altar, on one side sat the dean; and on the other was the Governor, accompanied by the gunboat-captain, and two or three of the chief officials of the dependency. A little to the left, in front of the dean, was a man whose duties subsequently proved to be multi-form. He changed the dean's robes, gave him a book when he asked for it; and when the dean was off duty, as it were, he acted as his substitute by standing before the congregation and reading, with perfect self-possession and very fair intonation and

expression, what may be synonymous with our "lessons for the day". This gentleman's habits in public were not wholly pleasing; now and again he would cough violently, and then, having drawn attention to himself, blow his nose in a very vulgar way.

Only two objects in the church seem worthy of particular mention. Over the altar is a picture of Christ's burial, which, with the sun upon it, is a little ghastly. As a work of art it is not striking otherwise. The other object is a brazen chandelier or candelabra, suspended from the roof of the church. This is of good workmanship, and bears an inscription and seventeenth century date. Internally, as externally, the church is whitewashed, the walls and ceiling are panelled, and pencilled with thin lines of gold, which, though a little barbaric, have a good effect. Of the service on this occasion, I can say little from actual knowledge. But that it had some political significance one ignorant of the language in which it was conducted could surmise from the frequent repetition of the words "Kong" and "Fadreland" in the mouths of the priest and people. The sermon in particular, admirably delivered by-the-bye, had a loyal and patriotic ring about it. And when all was over, and the congregation rose to their feet, the Dean of the Isles and the Governor bowed and shook hands by the altar, and the state officials formed in line, and marched down the aisle and out of the building, followed by the people. There was much smiling and renewed prattle outside the church as friends met friends, and not a few glances between men and maids, which might mean challenges for a hot bout of dancing in the small hours of the night.

"No; it will not be yet," said my little boy—I was for going to the House of Parliament at once, and securing a seat, but my guide, with a little contempt for my impetuosity, restrained me—"and it will not be any use for you to go since you do not understand the Dansk. The Lagthing's men are not fine to see, and they will do nothing, and you will come from them with a disappointment."

"Then what do you propose, my little man?" The child was becoming almost paternal in his tone and speech. Was it that his superior powers of language made him condemn me, or had he the scorn for a stranger that we English are civil enough to feel and signify now and then?

"You can go home and eat if you desire," replied the boy methodically; "or if you prefer, there is an assembly of farmers from the other isles in one of the houses, and they will let you in to listen to them. You will like that, perhaps. It is about bulls that they are going to talk. Oh yes; there is a great need of good bulls in the Faroes. But I must go; my mother signs for me. Farewell."

The boy gave me a smile of encouragement, as if to reconcile me to my loneliness, pressed my hand with his small fingers, and ran off down a breakneck alley after a lady, whose face I had seen turned towards us more than once. As sage a little twelve-year-old as one could wish to find in the best educated of families.

"I will see you again," he shouted from a distance, and then he fell into the hands of his mother.

About an hour later, I was conducted from my lodging to the Lagthing's house, or Faroe Parliament-building.

Of this edifice, happily, no archaeological description is necessary. Faroe has had a local government for nearly a thousand years, and even when the isles came under the control of Norway—in 1024—they were not wholly deprived of their autonomous privileges. At the outset, in the rude times when William the Conqueror landed at Hastings, and the Norwegian Kings were Christianising the North, even to the coasts of Western Greenland, Newfoundland, and Iceland, Faroe's rulers met in the open air. A stone was the seat of their president, and they clustered about him, rattling their arms, or murmuring in the way then commonly adopted to express approval or disapproval of public speakers and public measures proposed in debate. But subsequently a building was erected, and herein the four dozen gentlemen who composed the Parliament sat, each sandwiched, as it were, between a brace of councillors. A member could stoop to the front, and listen to the opinion of his one confederate, then bend backwards and hearken to the advice of the other; and if he himself were not very sure of his understanding, what could be simpler than to set the opinion of his one counsellor by the side of that of the other, and spare himself all mental exertion by acting straightforwardly if their opinions concurred, or with alternating partiality if they differed? Nowadays, however, a member has no such chance of an esteemed public life at

the expense of two men wiser than himself.

The present Parliament House is a building of boards wholly, except as to its foundation, and the superstructure a foot or two from the ground, and at stated times the exterior of it is tarred, as if to indicate the extreme solemnity of the business conducted within. It stands alone by the edge of a rough road, which, half a mile farther, almost disappears amid the heather, and bog, and boulders which characterise the interior of all the Faroes. A tumbling stream traverses the meadows on the other side of it, and when the grass is cut from them, these meadows are given up to the cows and calves, who, at little inconvenience, may look in at the windows of the Parliament House, and see the Lagthing's men during their most important sessions. Bleak brown hills close in the view from the building, north, south, and west.

My little boy led me to the door of the house rather perfunctorily. He had to pass several knots of his schoolfellows on the way, and he did not seem to relish the distinction which had been given him on account of his industry as an English scholar—even in the Faroes a "sap" is probably not appreciated according to his merits.

"Come in with me," I said to the little boy, somewhat moved to pity by his dejected looks. If he were really a lover of knowledge for knowledge's sake it would be most instructive for him to be present at the opening of his country's Parliament.

"Not I," said he, however, with a tone that implied he would not bear another straw's weight of indignity. "Perhaps you will think it fine since you have not been born in Faroe; but it is nothing to me. I wish to go to play."

And the little boy's wish was quick father to the deed, for he went off forthwith, and, later, from my seat in the House of Parliament, I watched him elatedly playing at cross-tick with his schoolmates in the meadow outside, casting occasional glances of seeming derision towards the House of Parliament.

An usher, in untanned cowskin shoes, now showed me to a seat in a gallery of the chamber; for here, as at Westminster, a gallery is reserved for spectators and auditors at the sittings; though here, differing from Westminster, the gallery is raised barely a foot above the level of the rest of the room.

The members had not yet entered. Some of them were said to be upstairs preparing. But certain Faroese from the country were in the gallery by my side, looking as if they feared being devoured at any moment. Open-air folks, they would have been infinitely more at home in the open-air assemblies of the "Thing" five hundred years ago. They were restlessly fingering their red-and-blue striped turbans, and coming as near to a blush as their swarthy cheeks and manly years would allow. Not for the world would one of them have ventured to cross his legs unless he were rendered conspicuous by having them uncrossed.

Of the room itself a few words must be said. It was some fifteen paces in length by five in breadth, with the gallery at one end occupying nearly a third of its area. This gallery was divided from the house proper by a low balustrade of wood, with supports painted vermilion. A visitor could with ease stoop over and snatch the papers from a deputy's hand, or assail him personally. On a bracket in the wall, at the other end of the room, was a bust of King Christian the Ninth, of Denmark; and, under the bust, was the seat of his majesty's deputy in the isles, flanked by desks beneath him. Elsewhere was a portrait of the same King, who carried the hearts of the Faroese by visiting them for an entire day in 1874. Occupying the body of the room were the tables for the statesmen—ranged in a horseshoe—covered with serviceable brown oilcloth, and provided with ink-pots, blotting-paper, quill pens, and reports of the last year's session; and to each member was a chair. Otherwise the furniture was scanty, consisting of a stove on one side of the room, and a long, old-fashioned clock on the other. The windows looking from the chamber towards the hills, with the stream and meadows close by, were decorated with scarlet blinds, through which the sun shone with vivid effect; lastly, the cornicing was gilded. At a squeeze the room might hold about a hundred and fifty people.

After an interval the members themselves appear one by one. It is ten months since they met together; they may be excused, therefore, for not seeming thoroughly at home with their surroundings. They glance about them as if they were in a museum, at each other, at the tables, at us, the commonalty in the gallery, and finally, with sublime antagonism, at the vexatious papers on the tables. For

the most part, moreover, the gentlemen are as uncouth in their costume as in their personal appearance. They have put on the decent shiny black which marks these two months of the year very distinctly from the other ten; but it does not become them. Since last September they have worked on their farms, "taught school," or what not; and now they are brought by the irony of circumstance to sit in Parliament. How should they be at their ease so early in the day?

This gentleman, for example, during the previous ten months has not left his home in the lonely mountain-circled fiord in the north. All this time he has had no other associates than his own serving-men and maids, his wife, his flocks at shearing-time, his cows, and his dogs. Nor has he benefited by any culture or educational influences other than what he has been able to glean from the weekly Dimmalætting of Thorshavn, a meagre collection of pickings from the European papers of the latest mail. He is not a friend to town-life, which tends inevitably—in his opinion—towards the bottle and other iniquities; and, but for the reputed honour of the thing, he would have declined to be nominated as his neighbours' representative for the summer in Thorshavn. To be sure, he gets two crowns—two shillings and threepence—a day for the fifty or sixty days of the session, and a hundred crowns in cash are not to be despised in a poor country like Faroe. But, as counterpoise, how knows he what is taking place in his farm, twenty miles away as the crow flies? No wonder he does not look as contented as a man who is to help in the government of his fellow-men ought to look.

Here is another gentleman, whose farming profession nature has stamped oddly upon his visage. He has a face as dark as mahogany, but a bald head almost ivory-white for colour; and the partition between the white and brown is as decided as if he had been painted by hand. Another is lobster-red from his shirt-collar upwards until the tangle of his bushy hair hides his head. He is endued with a white linen shirt, and at intervals savagely assails his cuffs, which are too long for him, and pushes them with severity far up his sleeves. A third gentleman, remarkable for the modesty of his comportment, has a wen on his forehead like a decoration, and a similar wen on the back of his bald head, while a fourth is as untamed in appearance as if he had lived in a forest

without social intercourse for a score of years. This last member is singular in other respects. He wears a loose blue woollen jacket and black trousers, and his hair falls over his shoulders in thick, yellow-brown, curling wisp. His face does not inspire respect or affection. And the way in which certain of the other delegates, while and after shaking his hand, scrutinise his hair, his coat, and his legs, is very eccentric. He does not meet their gaze, but submits to it. Probably something is wrong with him in mind, body, or circumstances, or he may be exceedingly averse to politics in spite of his election into the Lagthing, and not sufficiently philosophic to conceal his aversion.

My little boy-guide had said the Lagthing's men were not fine to see, but he was wrong.

The Governor now entered the room with his cocked-hat in his hand, and greeted his colleagues one by one. In all they numbered about twenty, inclusive of the dean as head of the clergy, and the four sysselmen or district magistrates and revenue-officers of the isles.

The ceremony of opening the Lagthing Session was unaccompanied by any pomp. The Governor read the royal proclamation, and then gave the lead in a Hip! Hip! of loyalty, which the members and the two-score Faroese in the gallery continued somewhat weakly and formally. A resolution of some kind being then put before the members, tellers were nominated, and strips of paper distributed for voting purposes. Consequent upon this, it was highly funny to see the air with which one or two of the gentlemen approached their papers, pen in hand. One in particular, having frowned and lifted his heavy eyebrows in a plaintive way, drew his pen up and down over the paper fifteen or twenty times before he would venture a stroke. But when eventually he did begin, he carried the business through in the most frenzied manner, and the result was an autograph as picturesque as the Grand Turk's sign-manual. One could see by the light in this gentleman's eyes, the next moment, how happy he was to have got through the ordeal. The papers were collected in a box by a bashful teller; announcement of the success of the resolution was made; and shortly afterwards King Christian's obedient servants were dissolved for the day.

"Well," said my landlady, on my return to the house, "is it not like something you

have never yet seen before? Is it not a sight?"

My landlady and her words were irresistible; it was impossible not to laugh.

"What for you laugh?" she questioned heatedly, the next moment; "you think we have not much that we are to be proud of in Faroe? Why, I have been in Shetland for two weeks once, and I will tell you I have seen nothing to be compared to our Faroe Lagthing—nothing at all; and Shetland is a larger country than Faroe. But, I know well how it will be. You like the supper better than the Parliament, because you understand it better. A speech with a wine-glass in her hand, is more pleasant than one without, and it go more to the heart!"

After this cruel stroke of railery, my landlady withdrew, securing herself from the chance of discomfiture in argument by a positive retreat.

DIET AND DYSPEPSIA.

ONE of the questions propounded at an examination at which we were present was, "Have you studied physiology? If so, what are the causes of dyspepsia (or indigestion), and what is the simplest and best-known cure?" We had studied physiology a little; we had also a pretty good idea of some of the causes of dyspepsia; but we could not for the life of us tell what was the simplest and best-known cure for that disease. Nor can we now. There are almost innumerable drugs and nostrums for that purpose, but good results are few.

Some time ago a fertile and ingenious penny-a-liner stated that dining-rooms especially for dyspeptics were to be opened in London, and at them a doctor would examine each person as he or she entered, and prescribe what was best suited for the customer, even if it were only an antibilious pill and a glass of water! Perhaps such a place would suit chronic dyspeptics, whose peculiarities are very neatly summed up by Mr. H. Cholmondeley-Pennell. One can easily imagine the following dialogue taking place between a pert London restaurant waiter and a bilious-looking dyspeptic:

"Lunch, sir? Yes, sir. Pickled salmon,

"Cutlets, kidneys, greens, and——"

"Gammon!

Have you got no wholesome meat, sir?

Flesh, or fowl, that one can eat, sir?"

"Eat, sir. Yes, sir. On the dresser.

Pork, sir?" "Pork, sir, I detest, sir."

"Lobsters?" "Are to me unblest, sir."

"Ducks and peas?" "I can't digest, sir."

"Puff, sir?" "Stuff, sir!" "Fish, sir?"
 "Pish, sir!"
 "Sausage?" "Sooner eat the dish, sir!"
 "Shrimps, sir? Prawns, sir? Crawfish? Winkle?"
 "Scallops ready in a twinkling?"
 "Wheeks and cockles—crabs to follow?"
 "Heav'ns! nothing I can swallow!"

Unfortunately for those persons with weak stomachs, however, the dyspeptics' dining-rooms have not been opened.

We all know the result of the Duke of Marlborough's indigestion; and the story of the disaster attending Napoleon's over-indulgence in a leg of mutton has become historical.

A correspondent of the Daily Telegraph asserted, some years ago, that all the evils which had fallen upon our American cousins were due to dyspepsia, caused by a weakness for pie. Anthony Trollope said that the children of the United States were fed on pickles, but according to the correspondent to whom we have referred, they are raised on pie. "Wherever the visitor turns in the United States," the correspondent adds, "whether in the crowded city, the solitary roadside station, or the back settlement, he is confronted by pie. There it is—pumpkin-pie, blackberry-pie, pie of all kinds, but always of the same grinning splay shape, and with a flabby, indigestible crust."

When a young man of sedentary habits begins to be troubled with dyspepsia, he almost invariably imagines that he is suffering from heart-disease, or an enlarged liver, or softening of the brain—doctors tell us that people with weak digestive organs are troubled with these fancies—and, if he be poor, instead of seeing a medical man, he will, no doubt, consult some medical encyclopædia, in which case his worst fears will doubtless be realised. There is not, and there never can be, an object more worthy of pity than the young man or woman who "reads up" for the purpose of finding out from what complaint he or she is suffering. The chances are a thousand to one against anyone discovering for himself his disease. Even one of our scientists, a gentleman with a university education, confesses that, according to what he read in a medical book, he came to the conclusion that he was suffering from some chronic disease, and that he could not live very long. Yet he is still alive, and he instances his own experience as a warning to those who are apt to fly to a book instead of to a doctor when they are ill.

Physicians mend or end us,
 Secundum artem; but although we sneer
 In health, when ill we call them to attend us,
 Without the least propensity to jeer.

If a doctor is at length consulted, the patient will probably be surprised, not to say indignant, when he or she is told that dyspepsia is causing all the trouble. When the usual health is regained, the patient will perhaps consult numerous books, and make a note of the delightfully conflicting paragraphs in the "household column" of the local paper, in order to discover what to eat and what to avoid to prevent a recurrence of the same complaint—for it is a popular delusion that dyspepsia is caused by eating indigestible food only—and, if all the articles of diet enumerated as indigestible be placed on the index expurgatorius, there will scarcely be anything left to eat.

Most authorities are of opinion that cheese is indigestible, yet even on this point doctors cannot agree. A distinguished French chemist has suggested that, to render cheese digestible, a quarter of an ounce of potass should be added to every pound of cheese; while a German chemist has experimented upon several kinds of food—such as cheese, meat, milk, and eggs—and he boldly declares that cheese is no more indigestible than meat and many other articles of diet.

Suppers are also usually condemned. Some doctors assert that suppers are not only unnecessary, but positively harmful; that sound sleep cannot be obtained after them; and that three meals a day are sufficient. On the other hand, others are of opinion that a light supper is necessary to procure sound sleep. After a meal, they say, blood is drawn towards the stomach to supply the juices needed in digestion. Hence the brain receives less blood than during fasting, becomes pale, and the powers become dormant. Sleep, therefore, ensues. A doctor says that recently he was called at two a.m. to a lady who assured him that she was dying. The body was warm, he says, the heart doing honest work. To her indignation, he ordered buttered bread to be eaten at once. Obeying, the "dying" woman was soon surprised by a return of life and a desire to sleep.

Milk is generally considered a peculiarly nutritive fluid—indeed, a perfect food—and therefore suitable for persons of all ages, when it agrees with their stomachs; yet no less an authority than Sir Henry Thompson states that "for us who have long ago achieved our full growth, and can thrive on solid food, it is altogether superfluous, and mostly mischievous as a

drink." He also says that the primary object of drinking is to satisfy thirst, and that water is more powerful to this end when employed free from admixture with any solid material. Chocolate, thick cocoa, or even milk, are therefore not so efficacious in allaying thirst as water. "So plentiful is nutriment," he adds, "that the very last place where we should seek that quality is the drink which accompanies the ordinary meal." In this respect, at any rate, Sir Henry Thompson is at one with the vegetarians.

Whole-meal bread is held by vegetarians and many others to be far superior to other kinds; and one would naturally think that the question could soon be settled by a competent analyst. The arguments and reasons on both sides are, however, very conflicting. Dr. T. L. Nichols, the high-priest of English vegetarians, says: "Whole-meal bread, or 'Graham' bread as it is called in America, which was once made by all English bakers, is the best that can be made—easy of digestion, a preventive of, and a cure for, constipation, and affording perfect nourishment to every organ of the body. The common white bread of the baker has lost a large portion of its tissue-forming elements in the bran, shorts, grit, etc., thrown out by the miller, so that it consists largely of starch, and causes feverishness and constipation." This will be news to many. Hear the other side, however. "Whole-meal bread is a pleasant food, and yields to chemical analysis a higher percentage of nitrogen than white bread; but when equal weights of the ordinary and the whole-meal are passed through the body itself, ninety-five parts of white and about ninety parts of the whole-meal disappear, the residue from the latter containing much nitrogen that is wholly insoluble; hence, when submitted to this crucial test, it is at once evident that one hundred and five and a half parts of whole-meal bread will have to be eaten to equal one hundred of ordinary bread. This proportion once obtained, the superiority of one above the other as food for the people is to be judged from a different standpoint—such as the price of the two kinds of bread, and any other properties they may possess."

Opinions differ greatly as to the relative nutritive value of many articles of food. Many people would think it impossible for a "literary man" to live on nothing but brown-bread and apples and drink nothing but water; yet we know an author who

does this, and who, moreover, enjoys excellent health. Dr. Nichols says he knows a musical composer and author whose favourite dish is a compound of potato, Spanish-onion, and oatmeal—certainly a curious mixture. From these instances it is quite clear that it is possible, even in England, to work hard on a diet varying greatly from that of our orthodox ideas. "A pound of maize," says a vegetarian writer, "costs a halfpenny, a pound of wheat a penny; either contains more nutriment than three pounds of beef, which is nearly three-fourths water. It is quite possible," the writer adds, "for any healthy man or woman to live on threepence, twopence, or, at need, only one penny a day."

There can be no question, we think, that in the matter of diet, everyone should be guided by experience, and not rely on the experience of others. As Pythagoras says: "Choose always the way that seems best, however rough it may be: custom will render it easy and agreeable." To show the necessity of experimenting, as it were, upon one's self, we will quote an experience of Mr. R. A. Proctor, who, when about twenty, suffered severely from sick-headache. "Neither exercise nor rest," he says, "availed me aught against persistent attacks. But at length . . . I determined to ascertain, if possible, the cause of those attacks. I reasoned that there must be some way of explaining the circumstance that during such and such days I was free from head-trouble, and then for a day, or two days in succession, I would be absolutely disabled by intense pain. My habits were regular and temperate, my regimen and diet sound according to usual medical opinions. I tried stopping the glass of beer or wine which I usually took with dinner and with supper; but no change was produced in my health. I tried the omission of pastry from my food, and my diary showed a slightly diminished average number of sick-headaches per month; but they had not by any means taken leave of me. I took less coffee at breakfast and less tea in the evening; but the effect of this change was unfavourable. I omitted sugar from my tea and coffee, but could detect no effect from this change. Then it occurred to me to omit butter from my food as far as possible. The effect of this change was instant and decisive. I had no more headaches." It is, of course, very improbable that abstinence from butter would prove of service in every case of sick-head-

ache; but, as Mr. Proctor states, a change of diet might often be of service. In some cases abstinence from pastry might be desirable, in others from cheese, and so on. No hard-and-fast line can be laid down owing to difference of taste. Cobbett, for instance, had an intense dislike to tea, which he characteristically called "hot slops". The tastes of the "Contentious Man" (as Mr. G. A. Sala calls him) certainly differed widely, in this respect at least, from those of Dr. Johnson, whose fondness for a dish of tea amounted to a passion.

One word of warning, in conclusion, to the dyspeptic: don't poison yourself by taking drugs. If you take any medicine, or try any system of cure—hot-water or otherwise—give it a fair trial. Perhaps it may be news to many sufferers that, as the late Dr. Austin Flint put it, the mind is often more at fault than the stomach.

VICTIMS.

By THEO. GIFT.

Author of "Lil Lorimer," "An Alibi and its Price," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER II. TWO HOUSEHOLDS.

IT was by the merest accident—the accident of an advertisement, at least—that Leah Josephs happened to be staying in the household, with the young daughter of which she was already on such affectionate terms.

Mr. Josephs, her father, being a clever and enthusiastic professor of botany, of some repute in the scientific world, and having an indifferent knowledge of chemistry into the bargain, had in his earlier days entertained the foolish fancy that he ought to be able to make a living, for his wife and five children, as well as a name for himself, by means of the former science; and had endeavoured, with great fervour and energy, to convert that delusion into a fact. Fortunately, however, for himself and those dependent on him, a strictly unscientific and unenthusiastic country had early convinced him of his error, by showing him in the most practical way that if a botanist's family are unfortunately so constituted as to sustain the pangs of hunger equally with stockjobbers and bacon-sellers, they had better acquiesce in the French financier's advice, and, forswearing the extravagance of bread, learn to "eat grass" cheaply. In other words, it regarded botany as an useless and not very orna-

mental study, not half so much in request as cat's-meat, and declined to pay for it even at the rate of that unromantic viand; and Mr. Josephs, accepting the verdict with the uncomplaining patience of his people, had forthwith laid by the thing he knew most of, and could do best, for the amusement of his chance leisure hours. He devoted himself instead to cultivating his remaining acquirement; one which even the unlearned British public deigns to tolerate, partly because of a vague connection in their minds between it and druggists' shops—which are useful and practical things—and partly as having been proved capable of demonstrating to the intelligence of a stipendiary magistrate the amount of illegal water in its milkman's cans, and of illegal grease and colouring matter in its buttermilk's pats.

To speak briefly, Mr. Josephs became a chemical demonstrator and analyst, and was at the present moment holding the former post at University College, London, and receiving a salary which (eked out by the writing of popular scientific articles for the magazines, and occasional chemical analyses for the trade) had enabled him to educate and bring up three sons, one of whom he had sent to Cambridge, and two daughters, in a way which the children of many far richer men might have envied.

It must be said, however, for his children, and for their mother, that they ably seconded him. If Mrs. Josephs's youthful beauty had long, long faded into a remote tradition of the past, it had done so in ceaseless calculations of ways and means, the eternal effort at getting sixpennyworth of bread out of five penn'orth in coppers; in sewing and mending; in giving singing-lessons and making puddings; in teaching her children their A B C, writing waltzes, and dusting bedrooms—above all, in being the most helpful, devoted, and cheery of wives to the long-haired and learned husband whom she revered as one of the demi-gods on earth, and had loved with all her heart ever since they were two children together, sitting on the same bench at school and learning verses out of the same Hebrew Testament.

Now, she had given up waltzes and singing-lessons. She kept two tidy servants, who took the pudding-making and dusting into their own hands. She allowed her children to teach her, and took immense pleasure and pride in the wonderful extent and depth of their knowledge; and she did very little of anything except look

after the household generally, coddle her husband, and keep the family's stockings in order.

As for the children, Matthias, the eldest son, had won a scholarship at King's over the heads of boys three or four years his seniors, had gone to Cambridge on the strength of it, and while there had covered himself with honours—leaving as the senior wrangler of the year, and very shortly afterwards being presented to the mathematical chair at Liverpool. He was a much bigger man than his father at present, and anyone with a fancy for listening to eulogiums of three-volume length on "the best and dearest son in the world", had only to ask Mrs. Josephs who gave her the diamond-and-emerald locket which sparkled so grandly of an evening on the expansive bosom of her glossy silk gown, or who paid for the new bay-window and carved-oak writing-table, which had lately been added to Mr. Josephs's study. Naomi, the elder girl, had helped her mother gallantly with hand and brain till she was nineteen—slaving like a housemaid at one hour, waltzing to Mrs. Josephs's tunes the next, and attending evening-classes at the Birkbeck the next; and then had married a fairly well-to-do young merchant, lived in a comfortable house in Maida Vale, and, despite the responsibility of four small children of her own, and the very probable prospect of as many more in days to come, insisted on paying her youngest brother's school-fees at the high-class Hebrew College where the two junior boys—bright, studious lads, full of ambition to follow in Professor Matt's steps—were pursuing their education until old enough for the London University.

Leah, herself, had been more fortunate, in one way, than her sister, being born five years later, and, therefore, not till the family difficulties had become lighter. Also, she had been early sent to a good school in the neighbourhood, and afterwards to another in Dresden; but, from the moment that she left the latter, having prolonged her stay there an extra two years as pupil-teacher, in order to carry on her musical and vocal studies without expense to her parents, she took up her sister's share of the housekeeping with equal zeal and energy, and had since made practical use on more than one occasion of her fine and well-trained voice by giving lessons; once to provide the best medical attendance for her father during a long and painful illness;

once to purchase a grand piano for the house; twice to help in defraying the family's annual summer outing; and, now again, to secure a similar benefit for herself.

An advertisement had appeared in the "Times" one day, announcing that a French family of distinction, residing in their own château in Brittany, were desirous of meeting with a young lady who might wish to visit that province during the summer—i.e., from May to July—and would be capable of imparting really good instruction in singing and pianoforte-playing to a girl of twenty. Said young lady to walk, drive, and read with her pupil, and to receive the same care and consideration in every way as the latter. Highest references given and required. Candidates to apply to Mrs. —, the head-mistress of a high-school for girls in London.

"Why shouldn't I apply?" said Leah, looking across the table at Mrs. Josephs as she finished reading this aloud. "It sounds nice, and it would be a lovely opportunity for polishing up my French and doing a little outdoor sketching. Besides, I've never seen Brittany. Eh, mother? What do you think?"

"Should you be able to get kosher meat there, and would there be synagogue?" asked David, the youngest boy, who—it being the time of the Passover holidays—was, with his brother, at home from school, and at that moment gulping down a final cup of coffee before starting off for a day at the Crystal Palace.

"What matter if there wasn't?" said John scornfully. "Do you believe Matthias got kosher meat at Cambridge? And he hardly ever goes to synagogue, even when he's here; nor father either—not often, that is."

"Because it's a long walk, and they've always got too much to do; but Leah goes."

"Well, if there wasn't one, she wouldn't have to," retorted John, in a tone which betrayed so clearly his own sinful ingratitude for the near vicinity of a synagogue as to bring on him a prompt rebuke from his mother.

"Do as you like, Leah dear," she said then, turning to the girl, who had been considering the advertisement before her too deeply to pay any heed to her brothers' interruption. "It would certainly be a pleasant change, and cost you nothing."

"On the contrary, for it would be money

in pocket, and that's what I want just now; for I've been setting my heart on sending off you and father to the British Association Meeting at Dublin this year."

"Lor', my dear, why should I go? Now, you and father, indeed—but, by the way, child, don't forget that this plan would mean your losing the whole season."

"Oh, that wouldn't matter. Naomi says she hears it's going to be a very dull one, and my charms will come out all the fresher next year. Besides, if I economise in dress this summer—and I don't suppose much of that sort of thing will be needed in an out-of-the-way nook in Brittany—I might be able to afford a dinner-gown, later on, of that delicious terra-cotta coloured plush which stirred my very soul to envy last week. At any rate, it wouldn't do any harm to go and see this schoolmistress, would it? I really think I will."

And, as Mrs. Josephs only repeated comfortably, "Well, do as you like, dear," before pulling down her youngest-born for a farewell hug, what Leah thought was, as usual, soon carried into action.

She made her little expedition the very next morning, managing it so well as to impress the high-school mistress very favourably with her appearance and accomplishments, and then the matter remained in abeyance for a week or two, during which sundry letters passed between Les Châtaigniers, near Pont l'Abbé, Dep. Finisterre, and Number Seventy, Addison Road West. Finally, Leah was informed that her claims had been preferred over several other candidates for the place, and that M. and Madame St. Laurent would be happy to receive her as soon as possible.

Before this was settled, however, she had found out that Madame St. Laurent was an Englishwoman married to a French husband, and that her daughter, their only child, had been brought up to speak and act like an Englishwoman in every particular. Madame St. Laurent had stated this herself very decisively in the letters, which were all written by herself in a feeble, pin-pointy hand, and stiff, though not unkindly phraseology. In particular she begged that if Miss Josephs came to them she would consider herself in the light of a guest at the château, following the same occupations and enjoying the same freedoms as Miss St. Laurent, and being treated in the same manner as any other young friend of the family would be.

Mrs. Josephs, who was not of a carping spirit, thought all this sounded well, and

that she should like Madame St. Laurent. Mr. Josephs hoped that the food would be good, and that the daughter's "occupations" did not include washing the lap-dogs and doing madame's hair; while Leah herself, though grieving a little that her hope of improving her own Gallicisms by residence in a purely French family were not to be realised, consoled herself with the reflection that she could at least air them on monsieur, the servants, and neighbours, and that in all other respects it seemed likely to be a very pleasant holiday excursion, with the advantages of being obliged to keep up her singing, and of plenty of facilities for reading and sketching.

"I wish you would make some sketches for me, then," said young Rosenberg, an artist friend, who, having dropped in during the evening, had been admitted to the discussion. "You know those two coast pictures I began when I was in Brittany the year before last? I didn't stay there long enough to work them up to the right pitch for studio finishing, and the result is they never have been finished. Now, if you really had sufficient sweetness and enthusiasm to go to work—I won't say for me, but for those two poor pictures—those incomplete creations crying mutely from the dead canvas for some helping hand strong enough to tear them from the blank which more than half conceals them—some soul which out of its own fulness will lend life and colour for their conception; if, now, you would not mind making a few rough sketches——"

Leah blushed.

"Oh, Mr. Rosenberg, but I'm only a beginner! I don't paint well enough for that."

"I beg your pardon sincerely, Miss Josephs, but that is just what you do do. I said 'rough' sketches, remember! If you were to attempt finished ones, or pictures—what you would mean to be pictures, you understand"—Mr. Rosenberg spoke with intense seriousness, and had not the least intention of incivility—"they would be no use to me at all. What I want you to do is just to gaze into Nature, over on the coast there, with your whole soul, and as you do so to jot down—daub down, if you will—your impressions of what you see just as you feel it: a rain-cloud blotting the waves, a wet fishing-net on the sand, a heap of goëmon (You know what that is? A seaweed), a beetroot patch with the dew on it, the colour of a Bretonne woman's petticoat—nothing

more; and, for Heaven's sake, nothing finished, improved, even thought over. An impression—the most ignorant impression in the world—is divine, because instinctive, and instinct is truth; but to tamper with it, to correct, to think over it, is ruin and misery. Promise me you won't desecrate your own truth by such an effort—that you won't attempt anything but what I entreat.”

Leah's dark eyes were dancing.

“Why, certainly,” she said, pulling her mobile mouth into as demure lines as she could; “that's easy enough. I'll promise not to ruin you by so much as a thought. And you shall have all the ‘impressions’ I can give you. Only don't blame me if they should not fit with yours. I have heard of such things as untrue instincts and false impressions—haven't you?” And cutting short Mr. Rosenberg's grave explanation that to be false they must have been coloured by some anterior or even hereditary prejudice, she went to the piano and began to sing the touching little song of the broken-hearted “Punchinello”, with the thoughtless people's gay refrain running ever through it:

Bravo! bravo, Punchinello!
He's the maddest merriest fellow.

“How divinely your daughter interprets my thoughts for me!” said little Rosenberg, edging himself up to Mrs. Josephs, and lifting his great mouse-like eyes to her face. “That is an exact expression of what I was saying. The people's instinct was misled by prejudice—the prejudice which thinks a clown must be merry. They never looked at his face. Now, if she will only remember the lesson, and look into the sweet face of the Breton sea-coast for me.”

This was how Leah came to Les Châtaigniers, arriving at the time when the grey old thorns were breaking into snowy bloom, when bluebells and daffodils were decking Our Lady's statues in the churches, and even the bleak and barren heaths overspreading so much of that part of Finistère, were perfumed and golden with honey-scented gorse.

Perhaps it was well for her that she had the sweetness of them in her nostrils, the beauty and freshness of the spring in her heart on that first arrival, for she was certainly suffering from a sufficient sense of disappointment to need some such consolation.

It had been a long and wearisome

journey, and on leaving the diligence which had conveyed her from Quimper to the dull, old-fashioned little town of Pont l'Abbé, she found she had still five miles more of road to get over in an exceedingly fusty and stuffy old family-carriage, grand indeed in bearing the St. Laurent arms, but sadly invalidated and deficient in springs; so that she was thankful in every aching bone when the coachman at last drew up before the gaunt, white-faced house, with its treble rows of dark, narrow windows all unbrightened by any adorning touch of flowers or white draperies. It had been raining, too, in the afternoon, and there were damp, greenish streaks running down the walls; the broad front steps were cracked and uneven, and she had to step over a large, unsightly puddle in the gravel walk to get to them.

There was no sign of anyone about, but the carriage-wheels must have been heard, for, before she had time to ring, the front-door was opened, and she saw, facing her, not a liveried man-servant, as she had half expected, nor a bright-eyed waiting-maid, with frilly cap and fluttering streamers, and French courtesies at the tip of her tongue, but a lean, middle-aged, red-haired female, who answered Leah's enquiry, “Madame St. Laurent est chez elle?” with a grimly-spoken British answer, “Yes, m'm; please to walk in,” and ushered her across a stone hall, whereof the paving had grown decidedly uneven with age, and up a flight of similar stairs to a long drawing-room, hideous enough in its formal atrocities of red velvet chairs in gilt frames, ranged along the cold white-papered walls at regular intervals, its huge windows, and heavy, marble-topped tables, to set Leah's beauty-loving senses aching.

There was a huge red velvet sofa with a gilt scroll-work top at either end of the room, and on the farther one was seated a middle-aged person, whom Leah decided, at the first glance, to be Madame St. Laurent's companion; a thin, flat-chested, flat-headed woman, with sandy hair dashed with grey, and worn in flat bands, a long pale face slightly freckled, pale-coloured, inexpressive eyes, and a thin-lipped mouth, which forced a faint, nervous smile as she rose and greeted the young lady with, “How do you do, Miss Josephs? I hope you are not feeling fatigued after your journey. Was it rough—the sea, I mean? Oh, Joanna, please tell Vera that Miss Josephs has arrived.” And then Leah somehow found out that it was

madame herself who was speaking, not her companion, and congratulated herself on not having betrayed her first suspicion. "Would you—would you like some tea, Miss Josephs? We dine in about an hour; but if you would like some tea——"

Leah hastened to say that she could wait very easily till dinner, and wished inwardly that her hostess would not say "Miss Josephs" quite so often. Of course in a grand lady it must be merely a foreign custom; otherwise it would have had a most plebeian sound; but all the same she pitied the poor woman for the palpable nervousness and timidity which made such a contrast to her own naturally frank and easy manner; and it was not much of a relief when a small, pale, red-haired girl in a very dowdily-made black silk dress came in and shook hands almost as shyly as her mother.

Joanna reappeared a moment or so afterwards, and said sharply:

"Wouldn't Miss Josephs like to go to her room?" and madame answered with a kind of relieved haste:

"Oh yes—yes, of course. You would like to, wouldn't you, Miss Josephs?" and Leah went.

The relief was quite as great on her side.

"Three months with these people, and even the servants English!" she was saying to herself. "Oh, why didn't I stay at home!"

Nor did dinner-time, and the appearance at it of M. St. Laurent, tend to restore her complacency. A swart, elderly Frenchman, with a closely-cropped head, bilious complexion, and heavy black brows and moustache, he did not present a very inviting appearance for any young woman's eye, and his extreme taciturnity, and the evident awe with which his wife and daughter regarded him, had a quenching effect even on Leah's bravest efforts at cheerfulness.

It was another surprise to her to find that, before her at any rate, Madame St. Laurent always spoke to her husband in English, and though Vera did not follow her example, and monsieur addressed both his wife and daughter (when he spoke to

them at all) in French, he was of so abnormally taciturn a disposition, and evidently understood English so well, that Leah felt it would have looked like affectation or forwardness on her part to have attempted any practising of his own language on him for her benefit.

At dinner they were waited on by a bald-headed man-servant, in rusty black, who, as Miss Josephs soon found, combined in his own person the offices of butler, valet, and odd-man. But one does not converse with the butler if one is a young lady visitor; and it was Joanna who waited on her at night, and called her in the morning, and Joanna who answered the bell, dusted the rooms, did Vera's hair, and seemed at once housekeeper, maid-of-all-work, and humble friend to the mother and daughter whom she served.

There were other domestics in the house, notably a cook, and either one or two black-eyed, brown-cheeked under-girls, who did the rough work, and sang and chattered like a couple of linnets over their pails and scrubbing-brushes; but, as they hardly ever seemed to come in contact with their employers, and as even Vera never spoke to any of the servants but Joanna, Leah had no excuse for doing differently.

"Call this a distinguished French household!" she said to herself scornfully when she went up to bed in a huge, bare-looking room with an unmistakably English Kidderminster on the floor, English moreen curtains at the window, and an English feather-bed on the bed. "Why, I might as well be boarding in Clapham or Margate with a respectable schoolmistress who had married her French master. Oh, what a disrespectful comparison, and how shocked they would be if they could hear me! But what a prim, curious woman she is; and what odd phrases she uses! I thought no one but servants or dressmakers talked of 'genteel society' nowadays. But perhaps she meant the French 'gentille'. One mustn't be unfair, and yet"—Leah paused for a moment, and then added with a laugh which had almost tears in it—"and yet I am awfully disappointed, and I wish I hadn't come."

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